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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Los Angeles VA Reduces Water Use

LOS ANGELES, CA., April, 20 – Conserving water, at no cost, and providing veterans with jobs? Does that sound too good to be true? Well it's true and it's happening right now at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (VAGLAHS).

The turf reduction initiative is well underway and saving VAGLAHS about \$7,000 per acre in annual savings. By the end of the summer a total of 35 acres will be inhabited by colorful, drought tolerate, native California plants. Let me do the math for you, \$245,000 will be saved on an annual basis, as a result of this water conservation effort.

Also, a \$1.00 per square foot rebate is provided to VAGLAHS and the campus improvements (eradication of the turf, irrigation system, planting of the plants) have been provided to VAGLAHS at no cost.

“This is a win-win situation for us; the savings generated will directly support our healthcare operations, so it's benefitting both our veterans and the environment,” said VAGLAHS Associate Chief of Asset Management, Jeffrey Blake.

The funding is provided by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), as an effort to conserve water resources. The Turf Company, a veteran owned and operated business is working on the landscaping component and provides transitional employment for veteran workers from the VA Compensated Work Therapy program (CWT).

“Our collaboration with the LADWP and the Turf Company has allowed us to convert grounds here at VAGLAHS into a drought tolerant native garden. The amount of water we are saving has exceeded my expectations and we are thrilled about the positive environmental impact. It's a great federal and local government partnership, and one that has allowed our veterans with employment,” said VAGLAHS Director, Donna Beiter.

VA CWT program is a vocational rehabilitative program that trains veterans with mental and physical disabilities to help them obtain employment opportunities. The veterans working are currently maintaining the new landscaping and they will continue to work on the expansion of the project.

VAGLAHS will continue to meet the federal mandate to reduce water consumption intensity by expanding on VAGLAHS grounds, as rebates become available from the LADWP.

About the VAGLAHS: VAGLAHS is the largest, most complex healthcare system within the Department of Veterans Affairs. GLA consists of three ambulatory care centers, a tertiary care facility, and 10 community based outpatient clinics. GLA serves veterans residing throughout five counties: Los Angeles, Ventura, Kern, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo. There are 1.4 million veterans in the GLA service area. Visit us on the web at www.losangeles.va.gov for additional information.

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